Brighton Snodgrass

History of South Asia

Essay 1

September 28th, 2025

Ramayana

If your wife got pregnant with a child you believe is not yours, would you send her away into the forest to get rid of her? Personally, I believe that Rama's treatment of Sita was not right in the story of Ramayana.

To start, Rama did countless things to win over Sita, so why would he up and throw her away? After Rama states all of the things he has done for Sita, he proceeds to say, "It is not possible for me to keep you, just like a light is unendurable for one with sore eyes" (Ramayana). What he says seems to contradict his previous actions and the love he built in their relationship. I believe that if Rama loved Sita so much as to go thousands of miles, he should be able to continue the love for her if she is pregnant. The decision he made to vanish her into the woods raises some suspicion about the values that he truly holds.

Secondly, I would argue that keeping Sita as his wife would prove more about his leadership to his people than exiling her would. Some might argue that it would look bad if Rama continued to stay with Sita after she was "unpure", however I would disagree. Staying with Sita would only further prove his love for her to his nation. It would show his people that he will continue to focus on the good over the bad, as a good leader should. Also, it would not harm his image as ruler. It would only make his image more appealing to the eye because of his love and endurance for Sita. This act would resonate more with people because it would demonstrate

his ability to lead with love and empathy. This would also shine light on his commitment to his values, showing that he cares about love and forgiveness over societal acceptance.

Lastly, Sita did prove herself to be pure in front of all the people so there should be no further reason that Rama needed her gone. While Rama was lecturing Sita, he stated, “I command you in front of all of these people to prove your purity. If you are pure in thought, word, and deed may the gods protect you” (Ramayana). This act was done to highlight Rama’s belief that it is important to follow societal expectations and integrity. By Sita willingly undergoing this test of faith, it shows the significance of her values and her character. After proving her purity Sita should have been let free instead of vanished. Rama wished good intentions upon her if she was pure, so he should not have sent her into the woods to vanish her all due to societal expectations. Rama should have been more focused on his values that are portrayed to his people and not about his image.

In conclusion, I believe that Rama’s actions and words after receiving news that she was pregnant, was wrong. Therefore, I tend to agree with the side of the debate that focuses more on literal occurrences. In order to reconcile religious faith with the moral tension in the story, it is important to consider historical and cultural context without being wrapped up in the literal interpretation of the morally challenging events.